

DuPage County Environmental, Safety, Health & Property Loss Control Program

Chain Saw Safety

Purpose:

Together, with the chain saws manufacturer safety information, this is to establish minimum requirements for the safe use of gasoline-powered Chain Saws. These saws are designed to cut and trim tree and shrub branches. These powerful tools operate at high engine speeds to propel the chain through a wood surface and make a quick cut.

Policy:

Only personnel trained in the safe use of a chain saw and provided with proper personal protective equipment shall be permitted to use a chain saw.

Do not operate a chain saw that is damaged, improperly adjusted, or not completely and securely assembled. Make sure the saw chain stops moving when you release the throttle control trigger.

It is the saw operators' responsibility to assure there are no persons under branches that are being cut or in the direction of trees that will fall when cut.

Operators should not operate when tired.

Excessive vibration, noise, emissions, and uncomfortable positions may cause fatigue.

Personal Protective Equipment required:

1. Safety boot
2. Snug-fitting clothing, long sleeve shirt or jacket, long pants
3. Protective leg chaps
4. Gloves
5. Hearing protection
6. Hard hat
7. For Wood Chipper / Tree Cutting Eye Protection: Safety eye wear for these operations also include Full Face Shields that contain wire mesh instead of a solid clear material along with safety goggles and ear protection.

Safe User Guide:

Do not rely exclusively upon the safety devices built into your saw. As a chain saw user, you should take several steps to keep you free from injury.

1. Carry the chain saw with the engine stopped, the guide bar and saw chain to the rear, and the muffler away from your body.
2. Don't cut until you have a clear work area, secure footing, and a planned retreat path from a falling branch / tree.
3. Be careful handling fuel. Move the chain saw at least 10 feet (3m) from the fueling point before starting the engine.
4. Refill fuel only after engine is cool to the touch.
5. No smoking when fueling the saw.
6. Do not allow other people near the chain saw when starting or cutting with it.
7. Bystanders and animals should be kept out of the work area.
8. Make sure the saw chain is not contacting anything before starting the engine.

9. **Drop starting is NOT permitted**, start the saw while it rests on the ground or another firm support with the chain's brake engaged.
10. Check that the cutting area is free of obstructions. Don't let the nose of the guide bar contact a log, branch, or other obstruction that could be hit while you are operating the saw.
11. Do not operate a chain saw with one hand! Serious injury to the operator, helpers, bystanders, or others may result from one-handed operation. Chain saws are designed for two-handed use.
12. Don't overreach or cut above shoulder height.
13. Use extreme caution when cutting small-size brush and saplings because slender material may catch the saw chain and be whipped toward you or pull you off balance.
14. When cutting a limb that is under tension, be alert for spring back so that you will not be struck when the tension in the wood fibers is released.
15. Keep the handles dry, clean, and free of oil or fuel mixture.
16. Operate the chain saw only in well-ventilated areas.
15. Do not operate a chain saw in a tree unless you have been specifically trained to do so.
16. Shut off the engine before setting the chain saw down.

Know what Chain Saw "Kickback "is:

Kickback may occur when the nose or tip of the guide bar touches an object such as a nail in a tree or when the wood closes in and pinches the saw chain in the cut. Tip contact may cause a lightning-fast reverse reaction, kicking the guide bar up and back toward the operator.

1. Be alert at all times to guard against a possible kickback reaction. Always be aware of the position of your bar's nose. **DO NOT SAW WITH THE TIP.**
2. Different models of cutting chain are available for most cutting tasks. Use the chain suitable for your type of cutting, with the lowest kickback potential.
3. Narrow-nose bars are recommended for maximum kickback safety.

Operating Condition:

Follow the manufacturer's sharpening and maintenance instructions for the chain.

Replace bars and chains only with those specified by the manufacturer or the equivalent.

All chain saw service, other than the items listed in the owner's manual maintenance instructions, should be performed by competent chain saw service personnel. (For instance, improper tools used for repair may cause damage to various parts).